

TESTIMONY FOR THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, MARCH 6, 2015

Governor Malloy and Members of the Appropriations Committee

I am Brita Darany von Regensburg, founder and president of Friends of Autistic People.

FAP was the first organization in our area to advocate for every grown child on the autism spectrum as they aged out of the school system.

The Governor and many members of the Committee have known me for years as I speak for my own daughter Vanessa Darany and many of her peers on the spectrum. Vanessa is one of the fortunate ones who is in the “system” on account of her profound autism but over the years we have seen that the funds her support system receives on her behalf get cut and existing services are reduced. She needs more autism services beyond room and board, etc. and a policy of cutting the DDS’ budget year after year totaling about \$ 40 million dollars by now is just not acceptable.

When we met with Governor Malloy he indicated to us that he supported people with disabilities yet the budget does not reflect his statement.

The families, the friends and the voters of CT, and there are many, want their voices heard when budgets are made and funds are appropriated. The DDS’ budget must be increased rather than cut. There is a tsunami of kids with autism who are leaving the school system every year and desperately need services. Governor Malloy and members of the appropriations committee, please listen to their and our voices. These kids that are aging and those who are already over 21 need supported housing and autism specific services commensurate with their needs to continue their progress as they start their “adult” lives.

As of now they are facing a big black hole which they fall into as they abruptly lose their supports. They need to receive supported housing BEFORE their parents die. They need to be put back into the system so they can receive supports in adaptive living skills, in communication, social and vocational skills that will enable them to become as independent as possible, find employment and give back to society.

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